

I had never run against TRENT LOTT for anything before. In the conference he spoke in a very precise, clear way.

We were asked in the news conference about the election. I mentioned that I started off in this campaign with a small base of support, and during the campaign it got smaller. That was because of the proven leadership ability of TRENT LOTT and his obviously excellent qualifications for this job.

I am confident that he will be a great success as majority leader. And I am honored to work with him.

Mr. WELLSTONE addressed the Chair.

Mr. THURMOND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I would be pleased to defer to the Senator from South Carolina. I ask unanimous consent that I follow the Senator from South Carolina.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I rise to congratulate Senator TRENT LOTT upon becoming the majority leader of the U.S. Senate. He is a man of integrity, ability, and dedication, and, in my opinion, will make one of the finest majority leaders that this country has ever had. I believe as time goes by that people will see the wisdom of this man being elected. We are proud of him. We are proud of the State he comes from, the leadership it has produced. We predict great things to happen during the term of Senator LOTT as majority leader.

COMMENDING SENATOR THAD COCHRAN

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, while I am talking, I also commend the other Senator from Mississippi, the able Senator THAD COCHRAN of Mississippi, for the great service he has rendered to his State and Nation. He has been steadfast and sound in his positions, and he has ably represented his constituents. We are proud of him and congratulate him on his accomplishments throughout his entire career.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. WELLSTONE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

THE SENATORS FROM MISSISSIPPI

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I actually came to the floor to speak about another issue, but I do want to, first of all, congratulate Senator LOTT and Senator COCHRAN. I cannot pledge to my friend from Mississippi my wholehearted political support, but I certainly can pledge my personal support.

I wish you well, Senator LOTT. And Senator COCHRAN, I do not think there is anybody that at least I have had a chance to meet on the floor of the Sen-

ate, that is more honorable and more personable. When Senator COCHRAN talks about civility and when he talks about good politics, of bringing people together, he epitomizes that. I mean that very sincerely.

MENTAL HEALTH AMENDMENT

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I rise to talk about what I hope will be a bipartisan approach, but I speak with a considerable amount of concern. I have worked very closely with my colleague from New Mexico, Senator DOMENICI, a Republican, and very closely with my colleague from Wyoming, Senator SIMPSON, on a mental health amendment to the insurance reform bill.

That amendment passed, Mr. President, by a 68-to-30 vote. What that amendment said was that as we look at insurance reform, we do not mandate benefits, but once plans are put into motion, and once there is an agreement about a particular plan for employees or for citizens, this ought not to be discrimination against people who are struggling with mental illness, illness that is diagnosable and treatable. That amendment passed by a 68-to-30 vote.

What we were simply saying is, for gosh sakes, do not put people in a position where they cannot work because they will not get the coverage, and they have to be on medical assistance. Do not put people in a position where they could do well in school, but they cannot do well in school. Do not put people in a position where they are homeless, and they should not be homeless. Do not put people in a position where they wind up incarcerated, where that is not where they should be.

Mr. President, we had strong bipartisan support. It then went to what will, hopefully, be a conference committee. It is with profound disappointment and some indignation that I say on the floor of the Senate that what has now happened on the part of my Republican colleagues on the House side is they have essentially knocked out the whole amendment.

Mr. President, working with Senator DOMENICI, Senator SIMPSON, people like Senator CONRAD, we came up with a pared-down formulation that said at least for lifetime limits, at least for annual limits, have the same caps as for physical illness, so that people who are struggling with mental illness are not put under economically, so that people can receive the care that they need. We should end this discrimination.

This particular compromise would cost, according to CBO, 0.2 of a 1-percent increase. That is it. Mr. President, there is no good policy reason, I say to my colleagues on the floor of the Senate today, there is no good policy reason why this compromise that we presented to members of the conference committee on the House Republican side should not have been accepted. It is fair. It is equitable. It economically

makes sense. It is just. It is the right thing to do. There is not one single article that can be made against it. Not one single argument that can be made against it.

Now what we hear on the House side from Republicans is that what we will get is a commission to study the problem. Senator DOMENICI does not consider that acceptable. I do not consider that acceptable. Senator SIMPSON does not consider that acceptable. That is not even the point. It is not acceptable for families all across this country who thought we were going to finally end this discrimination.

Mr. President, there will be a press conference this afternoon at 2 o'clock. A lot of the families, men and women and children who are struggling with mental illness, will be there. Several of us will be there. I think what they will say is they are going to visit with every member of that conference committee on the House side, Republican and Democrat alike. They are going to visit, I say to my good colleague from Mississippi, Senator LOTT, they are going to visit with leadership, and they are going to say to leaders and they are going to say to Democrats and Republicans alike: "Tell us why it is still not time to end the discrimination. Tell us why you are unwilling to end this discrimination against our children, against our wives, against our husbands. Tell us when it is not time to end discrimination."

Mr. President, I say to my colleague from Mississippi, if I could get his attention, I want to mention this afternoon at 2 o'clock we will have a press conference with some wonderful families who have been struggling with mental illness. You know Senator DOMENICI cares so much about this. They are going to meet with leadership and say, "Look, the formulation that we now came up with," not the commission, "at least should not have arbitrary caps on lifetime and annual limits, costs 0.2 of 1 percent." It helps end the discrimination. Please do not shut our families out.

I hope you will give them your utmost consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

CONGRATULATIONS TO SENATOR LOTT

Mr. COHEN. Mr. President, let me first add my congratulations to the new majority leader. I think that TRENT LOTT will do an outstanding job and one that will certainly make our party proud, but the country proud as well. I was pleased to have his colleague, THAD COCHRAN, with whom we both entered Congress, stand up in a true southern fashion, extend his warmest wishes and willingness to work with you. It will be a great team from Mississippi and for the rest of the country. I add my accolades to you, Mr. Leader.